

Dear Members of the Higher Education Committee,

Michigan's institutions of higher education provide a pathway for low-income students to achieve upward mobility and uplift their families and communities out of poverty. As food costs rise, college students are directly affected. 4.4% of Michigan State University students, 1 in 3 Central Michigan University students, and over 30% of University of Michigan students have faced food insecurity. While most Michigan colleges have taken action to mitigate food and housing insecurity on campus, many are unable to sufficiently meet their students' basic needs without additional funding. In light of the social, economic, and health benefits associated with earning a college degree or certificate, fueling an equitable recovery from the pandemic requires prioritizing students' basic needs so they can remain in school. - Kate Kling

I write today in support of the Hunger Free Campus Grant Act (HB 5097). Michigan's institutions of higher education provide a pathway for low-income students to achieve upward mobility and uplift their families and communities out of poverty. I have seen my fellow students forgo meals during the day because they are either unable to afford food on campus or bring their own food for a day of classes because they need to save money. I have friends who qualify for SNAP benefits, and not even realize that there are resources they can access. This bill would help educate students on existing resources and expand the capacity for institutions to provide for their students' needs. - Parker Dennings

I write in support of the Hunger Free Campus Bill (HB.5097). Michigan State University has one of the most diverse communities in the state, with students coming from all backgrounds and graduating with the skills to improve their communities. Yet, students at institutions across Michigan have been found to face higher rates of food insecurity than their peers from past generations. Black, Latino, Indigenous, former foster youth, and student-parents experienced the highest rates of food hardship. The economic fallout of the pandemic has only exacerbated the prevalence of hunger on Michigan's college campuses. - Maren Nicolaysen

As someone who comes from a low-income background, I can personally attest to the struggles that come with pursuing higher education as well as dealing with food insecurity. There were points in my life where my family would have been considered food insecure, and the effects it had on my education were drastic. Focusing in school became practically impossible when I had to worry about when my next meal would be, and when I started learning about nutrition, I realized how much my diet was truly lacking. This created constant insecurity inside of me where all I could think about was the wrong things I was eating, but I did not have access to the right things. Therefore, I struggled in silence. My grades slipped and so did my mental health. It was only when my family started earning more and could afford healthier foods did I get back on track, but we were lucky. Many people, especially college students, will not be able to achieve the same, and that is why the Hunger Free Campus Bill is necessary. - Delaney Grant

The Spartan Food Security Council urges your support for the Hunger Free Campus Bill
HB.5097

Sincerely,

Parker Dennings, Maren Nicolaysen, Delaney Grant, and Kate Kling

Spartan Food Security Council Members

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